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Chairman: Mr. KUKAN (Slovakia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/48/3 (chap. VII.D), A/48/24, A/48/56-E/1993/6, A/48/207, A/48/289, A/48/291, A/48/293, A/48/359, A/48/462, A/48/476, A/48/484; E/1993/50/Rev.1; A/C.3/48/L.2, L.3, L.4)

1. Mr. AL-MEHAIRBI (United Arab Emirates) said that the international political climate was now favourable to the strengthening of social and economic development and international cooperation with a view to finding solutions to the problems arising from wars and conflicts as well as natural disasters. The United Arab Emirates spared no effort to provide the necessary physical and moral assistance to countries affected by such conflicts and disasters. Its policy of sound development was aimed at achieving stability and equitable growth in order to provide humanitarian, social, education and health services to all, since the human element constituted the true strength and capital of a country.

2. With respect to social services, his country was guided by the premise that the family was the basic unit of society. It had established social guidance centres and ministerial committees on the family to promote family responsibility, the protection of children, the proper upbringing of youth and the prevention of delinquency. It had also established centres for the care and rehabilitation of the disabled and homes and clubs for the elderly. Regarding education, he said that the number of students at all levels of education had increased, and centres had been established for applied scientific research. Centres and programmes had also been established for the eradication of illiteracy and for adult education. In the field of health, hospitals, clinics and child care centres had been built, and health awareness programmes were being implemented. Finally, his country devoted great attention to programmes aimed at raising general cultural and social levels and promoting youth training for sports, as well as at inculcating humanitarian principles in accordance with the true Islamic religion and moral values.

3. His country commended the work accomplished by the United Nations in strengthening social and economic development. His delegation pinned great hopes on the 1995 World Summit for Social Development and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. Furthermore, his country looked forward to participating in the International Year of the Family and hoped that 1994 would see the adoption of a long-term strategy in support of the family. The Member States were urged to make positive and effective contributions to enable the United Nations to fulfil its obligations in order to achieve progress and well-being for all humanity.

4. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), said that AMU shared many of the principal goals linked to development, namely the promotion of social justice, the protection of vulnerable groups, the integration of youth into social projects and the fight against crime. The high incidence of malnutrition, illiteracy and poverty in the developing countries, reflected in the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation, were due in part to the dichotomy between long-term development

(Mr. Abdellah, Tunisia)

objectives and the effects of sudden structural adjustment programmes, and to a lack of measures to benefit the most disadvantaged segments of society. Indebtedness, excessive debt servicing and depressed commodity prices had also hampered the success of development strategies. A global approach was needed to resolve problems of social development. In that connection, AMU commended the efforts of the international community to promote development policies and urged the United Nations and its specialized agencies to provide additional support in implementing social policies.

5. The themes of the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, which included alleviation of poverty, expansion of productive employment and social integration formed the basis for integrated action to advance social development. The AMU welcomed the idea of holding the Summit at a time when countries were confronted with difficulties created by transition to democracy and structural adjustment programmes.

6. The member States of the Arab Maghreb Union attached great importance to the family unit and supported the recommendations adopted at the United Nations Africa and Western Asia Preparatory Meeting for the International Year of the Family. Those recommendations stressed the need to promote respect for individual freedoms and rights, address the particular problems of rural and poor families, eliminate discrimination against migrant families and promote social equality. The World Summit for Social Development would provide an excellent opportunity to discuss social issues which had a direct impact on international peace and security.

7. Mr. OULD MOHAMED MAHMOUD (Mauritania) said that a review of the situation of youth in the world today was an appropriate time to evaluate the progress made since the General Assembly adopted the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth in 1985 (resolution 40/14). In fact, the situation of youth in the world continued to be of great concern and, in some respects, had deteriorated. Young people were an essential asset for the future of any society and their needs and rights, specifically in the areas of education, training, health and employment, had not been sufficiently guaranteed.

8. In the developing countries, which were experiencing great economic difficulties, the situation was particularly deplorable and had generated such social ills as juvenile delinquency, corruption and drug addiction. There had been a breakdown in the traditional family structure and religious faith, accompanied by problems of hunger, sickness, illiteracy and alarming levels of unemployment. The situation of the youth in rural areas was critical. In urban areas, many young people were tempted by harmful practices that were prohibited by Islam and were forced into marginalization. The new world order and preventive diplomacy, defined by the Secretary-General in his Agenda for Peace, would be judiciously implemented by a policy that ensured the rights and met the needs of young people. The tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year in 1995 would provide an excellent opportunity for the international community to renew its commitments to future generations. The General Assembly, in its resolution 45/103 of 14 December 1990, had decided to devote a plenary meeting at its fiftieth session to youth questions. Given the new challenges, his

(Mr. Ould Mohamed Mahmoud, Mauritania)

delegation wished to suggest that the United Nations consider convening a second world youth congress at that time, which would help to identify appropriate solutions to the very serious problems facing young generations throughout the world. The cost of convening such a conference could be reduced if it were to coincide with activities planned for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The convening of such a conference would considerably enrich that celebration and demonstrate the deep-felt concern of the United Nations for the problems of youth.

9. Ms. YIN YIN MINT (Myanmar) welcomed the decision to convene the World Summit for Social Development in 1995. There was a great need to analyse in depth the economic problems of the developing countries and their impact on social development. As recognized by the World Conference on Human Rights, extreme poverty was a major factor inhibiting full enjoyment of human rights. Her delegation hoped that the World Summit for Social Development would elaborate guidelines for Governments so that they could address social issues more effectively.

10. As indicated the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation, her Government's expenditure on education and health services had exceeded 20 per cent of total expenditures at the beginning of the 1990s. Her Government was formulating policies and programmes to alleviate hunger, improve health conditions and provide education and better housing to both urban and rural populations. Bearing in mind that economic progress would contribute to the social well-being of the people, efforts were being made to ensure a smooth transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. Fully conscious of the need to provide shelter, especially for the poorest segments of society, her Government was setting up new satellite towns. Those projects were substantially subsidized and had helped to ease overcrowding in the cities.

11. Efforts were being made to improve the quality of life of the various racial groups in the border areas and bring needed infrastructure to remote and mountainous areas. The development programme for border areas and ethnic groups had had a great impact on the elimination of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs in those areas. One of the reasons for their backwardness, apart from the inaccessible terrain, was that they had been controlled by armed insurgent groups who lived on drug trafficking. To date, 10 of those armed groups had been apprehended.

12. International support would greatly enhance Myanmar's efforts to achieve sustainable development. In that regard, her delegation firmly supported the World Summit for Social Development as a golden opportunity for developed and developing countries to work together to formulate comprehensive strategies to that end. Finally, her delegation welcomed the proclamation of 1994 as the International Year of the Family, as a meaningful opportunity to reaffirm the position of the family as the basic unit of society.

13. Mrs. ROMULUS (Haiti) said that many decisions taken by the General Assembly in recent years had rightly focused on the strengthening of activities associated with the social sector. Social policy issues had been discussed at the Vienna Conference on Human Rights, would be dealt with at the Population and Development Conference in 1994 and, most intensively, at the World Summit for

(Mrs. Romulus, Haiti)

Social Development to be held at Copenhagen in 1995. And yet, despite remarkable advances in social development, extreme poverty, oppression and exploitation had not disappeared. Had the priority truly been placed on the essential needs of people, the task would be almost complete. That observation should inspire redoubled efforts to implement a new international system of ethics based on the autonomy of the individual and the respect for human rights.

14. It had been demonstrated that bad economic policy and unfavourable international conditions could plunge whole populations into poverty. Low productivity, inflation and unemployment had created an impoverished class that had previously not existed. The world economic crisis, which had led Governments world wide to reduce spending, constituted a major obstacle to the reduction or elimination of poverty.

15. Although the new world order was freer it was also less stable. The wars, terrorism, and atrocities that had erupted after the replacement or dismantling of certain regimes were truly alarming.

16. In the view of Haiti, health and education should be the priorities of the World Summit for Social Development. Firstly, all peoples, however poor, should have the right to preventive care and medical treatment. Secondly, in a world where the economies of rich countries could not easily afford workers' training with a view to future employment, and in which investment in education in poorer countries had radically declined, the status of education was troubling. Economic obstacles and political difficulties must not stand in the way of education because only education could lead to participation in economic and social life and the strengthening of the democratic process.

17. Mr. MUSUKA (Zambia) said that questions of social development, hitherto sidelined by the imperatives of the cold war period, were slowly beginning to assume their rightful place on the global agenda. Although in past years many advances had been made in the social sector, in such areas as child immunization, health care and education, in many developing countries the social situation still remained precarious, as shown by high levels of poverty and accompanying high infant mortality rates.

18. Zambia was currently undergoing severe economic difficulties resulting from structural adjustment measures designed to revitalize the social and economic infrastructure, but which had also increased the incidence of poverty. A social action programme had been introduced to redress the situation; its projects, targeting vulnerable segments of society covered such areas as health and nutrition, education, water and sanitation, urban and rural roads, market development, transport, women in development, employment generation through public works projects, and development in small-scale industries.

19. Given current conditions in Zambia, his delegation felt that the promotion of integrated economic and social policies should be a top priority of the World Summit for Social Development. Furthermore, preparatory work for the Summit must take a realistic view of the practical consequences of implementing

(Mr. Musuka, Zambia)

conclusions and recommendations. Specific actions to promote cooperation in social development should be formulated, taking into account the interdependence between the success of national efforts and a supportive international economic environment.

20. At the close of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, numerous obstacles still stood in the way of their full participation in society. It was, however, encouraging to note that for the first time the rights of disabled people had been incorporated into the general human rights document of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, which clearly stated that no person should be denied the enjoyment of any human right on the basis of a disability. In Zambia, the Ministry of Community Development had conducted many programmes aimed at protecting the rights of the disabled, including the establishment of institutions offering education to disabled children and care for the blind. Recently a special fund had been created to assist those blind people who wished to return to their native villages.

21. Given the continued decline in the socio-economic situation in Zambia, it had become increasingly difficult for young people to enter the job market. Evidence showed that education alone was no guarantee of obtaining employment. The Government had consequently embarked on a basic skills development programme in both primary and secondary schools. The key to future development was the stimulation of human resources and the generation of productive employment. The Government, in cooperation with NGOs, had also inaugurated programmes to provide basic training to street children as a step towards their rehabilitation and integration into society.

22. His delegation applauded the decision to observe the International Year of the Family in 1994, and hoped that it would provide the occasion for policy dialogue on the current and emerging challenges of family life, and in particular, on the need for Governments to develop family-oriented policies that would eliminate difficulties experienced by households headed by women. His delegation hoped that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women would play a significant role in the International Year of the Family. Finally, Zambia had instituted a national preparatory coordinating committee under its Ministry of Community Development and Social Services to make preparations, in conjunction with NGOs, for the observance of the International Year of the Family.

23. Mr. AKPLOGAN (Benin) stated that development would require the elimination of the current economic order, in which two thirds of the human race could not meet their basic needs, including the millions in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, who existed in a state of almost absolute poverty. Regrettably, the world economic crisis had been accompanied by a general tendency to reduce the role of the State in social affairs. Stagnation and economic decline had led many developing African countries to adopt structural adjustment programmes, which had considerably restricted policies and programmes in the social sector in order to service a large official debt. It was imperative to reverse that trend, and to rethink development priorities so as to respond to genuine need in the areas of health, nutrition, education and so on. Social development must take place within the context of sustained, balanced development in which people were the priority.

(Mr. Akplogan, Benin)

24. Benin applauded the decision by the General Assembly to convoke a World Summit for Social Development and agreed that it should focus on the following points: the strengthening of social integration, in particular for the more disadvantaged and marginalized groups; the reduction of poverty; the expansion of productive employment, and the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of social development. In the view of Benin, the Summit should elaborate a plan of action aimed at devising an integrated programme for social development. It agreed that in order to achieve the degree of success of the World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna, the World Summit for Social Development must be accorded the same financial facilities and given the same measure of publicity.

25. As the Secretary-General had indicated in his report on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/48/462), the expectations of the Decade of Disabled Persons had not been fully realized. Despite some progress in certain developing countries with regard to health and rehabilitation, the number of disabled persons had grown over the course of the Decade, particularly in those regions stricken by war, drought or famine. In Benin, within the framework of the implementation of its national programme related to the World Programme of Action, several activities, however modest, had been carried out on behalf of disabled persons. The task before the international community was to continue to raise consciousness with regard to the plight of disabled persons, so as to take steps towards the creation of a society where disabled persons could feel that they fully belonged.

26. Based on its conviction that development was closely linked to the well-being of women, children and the ageing, the Government of Benin was making vigorous preparations for the International Year of the Family in 1994. It also intended to contribute to the preparatory work of the World Conference on Women to take place in Beijing in 1995. It was the hope of his country that those significant occasions would leave an imprint in the history of humanity.

27. Ms. SEMAFUMU (Uganda) said that, notwithstanding the reduction in infant mortality and illiteracy as a result of technological progress, the prospects for improvements in living standards for the majority of the world's population remained bleak. Economic difficulties, caused by an inequitable international system, remained an impediment to investment in critical areas essential to social and economic improvement. Although it was now acknowledged that more attention needed to be paid to the negative social impact of economic reforms, current poverty alleviation programmes were still woefully inadequate. At the same time political conflict and ethnic tension continued to cause widespread suffering and the destruction of socio-economic infrastructure, and an alarming world-wide upsurge in crime had yet to be addressed by existing institutions and policies.

28. The 1993 Report on the World Social Situation, which provided a useful source of material, would be improved by a more rigorous methodology to facilitate analysis and policy recommendations.

29. Although the United Nations system conducted a vast array of social activities, the approach tended to be fragmented. While a sectoral approach focused attention on vulnerable groups to a degree that a holistic approach

(Ms. Semafumu, Uganda)

might not, it had not resulted in sustained action, which could be achieved only by mainstreaming specific concerns into overall policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. The net result was that the whole of the activities undertaken by the United Nations was less than the sum of its parts.

30. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development would provide an opportunity to adopt a more holistic approach to social development based on the three core issues of poverty alleviation, social integration and productive employment. All three should be accorded equal priority.

31. Her delegation welcomed the institutional changes affecting United Nations activities in the economic and social fields and hoped they would increase their effectiveness. Further decentralization meant that regional commissions would play an increasingly important role. In that connection, the social development programme of the Economic Commission for Africa, which was relatively weak, needed to be strengthened. The report on the World Summit for Social Development (A/48/476) confirmed that view.

32. She welcomed the completion of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, and supported the appointment of a special rapporteur as a component of the monitoring mechanism. She looked forward to the completion of the manual on the integration of disability issues into national planning and development projects. She supported the proposed upgrading of the Disabled Persons Unit within the Secretariat, but would appreciate information on any consequent redeployment of resources.

33. Her delegation welcomed proposals for an early assessment of the International Year of the Family. The role of the family in a changing environment remained topical. The extended family, still the basic unit of African societies, played an important role in terms of production, political organization and social insurance, a role which should be further analysed, taking into account the need for the extended family to be protected. It should also be recognized that the extended family system had negative aspects, such as nepotism and the diversion of public assets to private use. The focus provided during the International Year of the Family would enable African societies to preserve the positive aspects while mitigating the negative consequences.

34. She expressed confidence that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations would provide a focus that would serve to bring the peoples of the world closer to the better standards of life in larger freedom envisaged by the founders of the Organization.

35. Mr. MARKER (Pakistan) said that the reports before the Committee gave cause for both concern and optimism in that chronic social and economic problems continued to dominate the social landscape in most developing countries, but that there was now sufficient experience to enable the world community to achieve the United Nations goal of promoting universal well-being.

36. It was clear that social development could not be dissociated from a country's political-economic matrix or from the external environment. Therefore a comprehensive policy, not a fragmented or piecemeal approach, was needed to promote sustained human development. The realization of that goal must be

(Mr. Marker, Pakistan)

promoted at key decision-making levels inasmuch as poverty, unemployment and social backwardness were common problems, with both national and international dimensions. The redistribution of wealth, job creation and integration of all segments of society must be reflected in policies at the community, national and global levels.

37. For his Government social development was a priority objective. Greater resources would be allocated to promote access to education, decentralize the public sector, reduce population growth, carry out environmental and water supply projects, and implement a narcotics control plan. While modest, those goals, if attained, would result in far-reaching social change.

38. There was growing awareness in the developing countries of the need to integrate economic and social goals and policies, and to develop a new paradigm buttressed by appropriate international mechanisms, which would ensure sustainable development and the full participation of peoples in that process. The focus must be on poor people, who must be enabled to make a full contribution to society.

39. The slowdown in economic growth was cause for serious concern, since unless the economy improved, social development objectives would remain unfulfilled. Emphasis on the market, without more equitable distribution of national wealth, could exacerbate social and political problems and impede attainment of the full potential of human development. A balance must be struck between the play of market forces and government intervention, the overriding principle being to put people at the centre of development, in other words, to extend democratization beyond the limits of political representation.

40. United Nations endeavours to promote a global social revolution could succeed only if a plan of action accepted by a multilateral consensus was evolved to address problems of trade, finance, debt and technology transfer. The growth of even highly competitive developing countries was threatened by protectionism, while debt was a millstone oppressing the low-income countries. The growing phenomenon of economic migration, which was creating complex social problems in developed countries, could also be addressed by promoting growth and human well-being in developing countries.

41. Economic and technical progress had been uneven, unequal, and exploitative, creating a growing disparity between rich and poor. The challenge was to achieve growth with equity. Poverty obliged the destitute to degrade their lands merely to subsist, while much of the world's finite resources were being depleted due to unsustainable consumption and production in the developed countries, which were largely responsible for the current environmental crisis. Social development could not be assured if a majority of the world's population was engaged in servicing the wasteful lifestyles of a small minority.

42. The post-cold-war era had seen several regional conflicts with a massive toll in lives and suffering. Unless they could be ended, economic and social development in those regions would be difficult to realize. The United Nations had a vital role to play through its mediation, preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping and peacemaking functions.

(Mr. Marker, Pakistan)

43. His delegation noted with satisfaction the preparations under way for the World Summit for Social Development. The thematic approach, revolving around the core issues of social integration, poverty elimination and productive employment, would make it easier to secure firm commitments at the highest political level. Nevertheless, the Summit should not be seen as an end but as a beginning of development for the people.

44. Mr. ABARRY (Niger) said that the close connections between democracy, social progress, respect for human rights and development were more evident now than ever before. Social development could therefore not be envisaged without a society in which the individual was the focal point of all development efforts. He hoped that the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 would be an opportunity for the international community to give specific responses to the constant appeals of many of its members whose chances of acceding to genuine development were being eroded as time went by.

45. Convinced that a community approach was needed to deal with thorny problems such as poverty, unemployment and health and that the mobilization of the population was critical to development activities, his Government had launched a number of projects in cooperation with non-governmental organizations using the Niger's meagre resources to assist vulnerable groups. The United Nations could not only provide the support needed to ensure that the efforts were not in vain but should also coordinate and clarify the nature of the activities of different agencies in the field in order to ensure that in the long run the highly controversial side effects of structural adjustment programmes were corrected.

46. The drafting of a family code in the Niger had filled the legal void which had existed in that area in the past. The launching of the International Year of the Family would give the international community an opportunity to address the problems associated with the family. As the development of young people including their education and employment were crucial elements in his Government's policy it had established a number of programmes to improve the training, economic and social conditions of young people. However, those programmes had been seriously compromised by the combined effects of the economic crisis, drought and structural adjustment policies. The youth, as the future of the country, must enjoy the maximum support of the society in order to be able to face the future with full confidence. His country also accorded great importance to the recognition of the contribution of the disabled and had introduced legal provisions defining the framework for their social protection and established programmes designed to give them at least the same opportunities as able-bodied people in society. His Government also focused considerable attention on combating drought and desertification, which seriously hampered efforts to harness water resources and to attain food self-sufficiency - essential prerequisites for the well-being of the population.

47. Archbishop MARTINO (Observer for the Holy See) said that the Holy See welcomed the new comprehensive United Nations approach to the development process, the material and spiritual dimensions of which required the free participation of every human being. The problems discussed in the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation required careful and immediate action and pointed to the need for equity and solidarity. While efforts at improving the economic

(Archbishop Martino, Observer, Holy See)

conditions of millions of people must be intensified, there was an obligation to provide all human beings with values and guidelines which could be combined with their material improvement to assist them in achieving a well-rounded development and a better quality of life.

48. He noted with satisfaction that the values proposed by the Pope and the Catholic Church to the young generations addressed the same needs as those cited in the report. In relation to ageing and disabled persons, the Catholic Church applauded all the gains made in longevity and in the elimination or cure of many diseases and urged that they be enhanced. In that connection, the international community should not miss the opportunity to rid the world of leprosy which, according to the World Health Organization, was now treatable and curable and could be eradicated at a cost of only $420 million over a period of six years. Society must give expression to its spiritual values and stop considering the care of the elderly and the impaired only in terms of financial costs.

49. The Pope had associated the whole Church with the United Nations in proclaiming 1994 as the International Year of the Family throughout the Catholic Church. The 1993 Report on the World Social Situation had touched on some problems of the family such as the high incidence of severe depression among young people due to the erosion of family cohesion and the fact that the increase in births out of wedlock partially reflected the diminished role of the family as an institution of economic survival. The Holy See intended to continue and intensify its efforts to safeguard the sacredness of the family.

50. Mr. OFFOR (Nigeria) said that the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation had failed to address the root causes of the distressing situation in developing countries. Future reports could perhaps examine the impact of factors such as the external debt crisis, debt-servicing obligations and trade barriers. The hopes raised at the end of the cold war that resources would be reallocated to deal with the causes of social tensions that might threaten the emerging democracies had been dashed. Consequently, those problems had not only increased but had also spread to all strata of society.

51. Africa was the hardest hit by social crises that were generally triggered by poverty due to a weak economic base and natural disasters. The World Summit for Social Development must address the underlying causes of social degradation and tension, particularly in the developing world, while both developed and developing countries would have to make a genuine commitment to tackling major issues such as the external indebtedness of developing countries whose development had continued to be hampered inter alia by increasing debt-servicing obligations and protectionism. With regard to protectionism, Nigeria hoped that the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations would be concluded by December of the current year and would take into account the interests of developing countries. The primary responsibility for improving the welfare of peoples lay with national Governments. Unfortunately, those Governments which had adopted structural adjustment programmes had been overwhelmed by problems. As Nigeria attached great importance to the place of young people in the socio-economic development of its society, it had set up a National Open Apprenticeship Scheme to help school leavers to engage in gainful self-employment.

52. Mr. AL-SAEID (Kuwait) said that Kuwaiti citizens enjoyed full social services all through their lives, including counselling, guidance and material assistance from government bodies and welfare associations. Social development assistance was also extended to numerous fraternal countries through various charity organizations involved in the care and rehabilitation of orphans.

53. His delegation had a keen interest in the 1995 World Summit for Social Development and would continue to participate in the preparatory meetings. Kuwait also devoted great attention to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women.

54. Equal attention should be devoted to the social welfare of the elderly and youth. Kuwait provided full welfare services to the elderly and had established clubs and homes for them. Life expectancy in Kuwait was currently 72 years for men and 76 years for women, which was close to that of the advanced countries. Kuwait also allocated considerable resources to youth, who were the mainspring of development and the driving force behind the reconstruction of Kuwait's infrastructure, which had been destroyed by the nefarious Iraqi occupation.

55. Kuwait was among the foremost Governments in providing care and rehabilitation to the disabled. It was not enough merely to provide assistance to the disabled; their capabilities should be put to use and developed. Disabilities were not only matters of birth or accident: they could also result from criminal acts of barbarism, such as the Iraqi occupation and the torture practised by the Iraqi regime, which had caused numerous cases of disability among Kuwait civilians. The international community witnessed such criminal acts daily in various parts of the globe, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina. His delegation therefore urged it not to remain content with providing care and rehabilitation to the disabled; it should also fight against the corrupt and tyrannical regimes whose acts resulted in disabilities.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

56. The CHAIRMAN said that the question of an open-ended working group to consider follow-up to and implementation of the recommendations of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on human rights was of the utmost importance and sensitivity. That meant that the group must be truly open and transparent, and undue delay in setting it up would be counterproductive. Informal consultations had revealed that the views of the Non-Aligned Movement were not acceptable to certain other delegations, so that for the time being he was unable to make any proposal that would command the support of a majority within the Committee.

57. Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia) said that implementation of the recommendations in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action was of paramount importance to the Non-Aligned Movement, which had carefully considered the proposal to establish an open-ended working group. Given the sensitivity of the issue, consensus was essential. The Non-Aligned Movement proposed the following text for consideration:

> "The open-ended working group shall consider the follow-up to and implementation of the recommendations of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action including the consideration, as a matter of priority,

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

of the question of the establishment of a High Commissioner for Human Rights for the promotion and protection of human rights, as set out in paragraphs 17 and 18 of part II of the Declaration.

"The open-ended working group shall be transparent, be fully supported by conference services, including interpretation and documentation, and work with a view to achieving consensus."

He trusted that all delegations could support that proposal.

58. Ms. SEMAFUMU (Uganda) said that it would be helpful if the Chairman could indicate which elements in the non-aligned position were unacceptable to certain other delegations.

59. The CHAIRMAN said that he could not speak on behalf of other delegations, and suggested that further consultations should be held, bearing in mind that undue delay would imperil the objectives of establishing the open-ended working group.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.